

Masking decor problems

By Corinne Abalt
staff writer

Ellie Cloutier of Birmingham packaged all her skills and talents, tied them with a silk ribbon and named her new business, "One and Only Studio of Silks."

Out of a 12-by-12-foot studio at 17250 W. 12 Mile, Southfield, Cloutier turns out silk flower arrangements, rents or creates fountains and centerpieces for parties, weddings and showers, makes custom copper masks to wear and to display, stitches needlepoint tapestries on commission and solves decorative and accessory problems with admirable ease.

She talked as she worked on revitalizing a silk flower arrangement for a client. She was cutting and

shaping flowers and stems as a good florist does real flowers. And silk or not, their rebirth was exciting.

"I buy the flowers from Taiwan, California — wherever I can get anything that's unusual. I just did a wedding arbor and a chupah (cannopy used in Jewish wedding ceremonies). I will set up fountains in a bowl. I have done whole weddings for friends."

Her list of credentials and achievements is substantial. She and a friend started a custom needlework business several years ago, "One of a Kind." The friend has since moved from Michigan, but Cloutier still needlepoints or pettpoints, as the case may be, on commission.

There's a large rectangular mirror in the studio with a beautiful strip of pettpoint splitting the mir-

ror diagonally. When Cloutier's favorite mirror was cracked, she had the good parts cut smooth and made an abstract pettpoint piece to fill in the space. It is, as the name says, one of a kind.

She's excited about the masks, which are fitted and made to order, often embellished with the client's favorite momentoes, feathers, beads, an earring or bit of lace. When they aren't being worn to a party of balls, they can hang on the wall as art.

Cloutier said silk flower arrangements can run from under \$20 to upwards of \$1,000. She's feeling good about finally putting her skills with accessorizing and flowers, live and artificial, into one big, beautiful basket, so to speak.

She can be reached at 557-5047, during business hours.



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

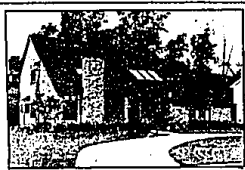
Ellie Cloutier models a copper mask she's still working on for her granddaughter, Stacy Kalleh. The mask she made for herself hangs on the wall.



Ellie Cloutier prepares to recycle a tired, but still usable, silk flower arrangement for a client.



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